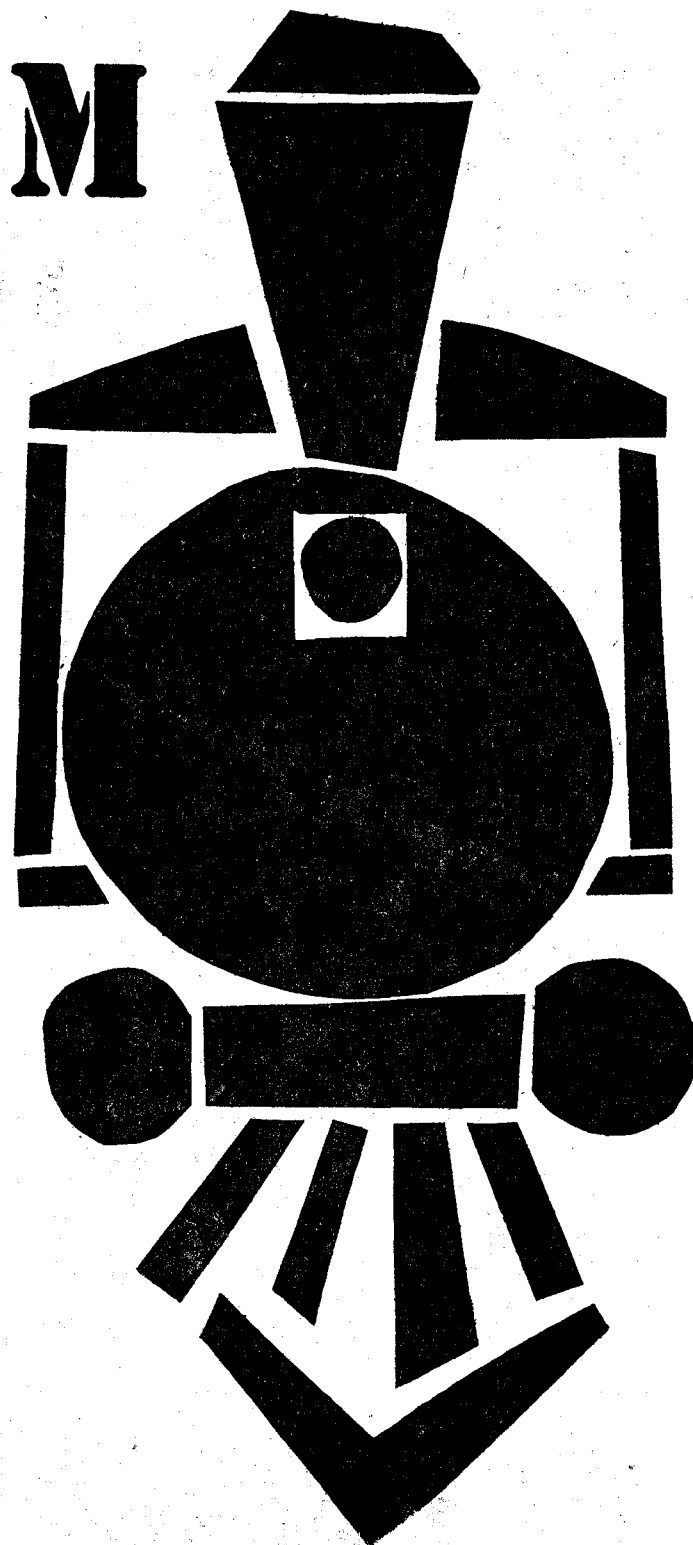


new masses

FREEDOM TRAIN

A SPECIAL ISSUE

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STAY ON THE TRACK!

ATTORNEY GENERAL TOM CLARK is credited with the idea of the Freedom Train, which will reach Manhattan about the time this issue reaches the streets. Its hundred priceless documents will be scrutinized in countless cities, towns and hamlets as the train wends its way across the forty-eight states on a year-long journey to be known as the Year of Rededication. Its precious freight includes the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, the Constitution and other similar documents that were countersigned by the blood of millions, documents treasured by all honest Americans who would be ready, once again, to defend them with their life's blood as they did in the Revolutionary and Civil Wars, in the war against monstrous fascism. Add them all up and they spell out the hallowed concept "democracy." And that is what tens of millions who will board the Freedom Train will expect to find in it. That is what our school-children, our civic organizations, our unions, our church-going millions envisage as they are called upon to participate in the year of rededication.

Now Tom Clark is, in a large sense, the engineer of this train. And we charge that he has coupled onto the train an invisible car. Hitched onto the train, in a moral sense, is the car which Mr. Clark is really interested in—one that, were it tangibly expressed in steel, would carry the documents setting forth the Taft-Hartley Act, the President's "loyalty" order, the various bills and programs that proscribe and invalidate everything else on the Freedom Train—documents that would deprive the preponderance of our citizenry, labor, the Negroes, Jews, political minorities, of every civil right, of constitutional guarantees and protections.

Consider: the tour of the Freedom Train is being sponsored by the American Heritage Foundation, and the chairman of the Board of Trustees is

Winthrop Aldrich. Of Wall Street. Among the members of the board are Paul Hoffman, Eric Johnston, Charles Luckman, De Witt Wallace, Mrs. Robert P. Patterson, Robert G. Sproul, Charles E. Wilson, John W. Davis. Vice-chairmen are William Green and Philip Murray, of organized labor. Although two labor leaders are listed among these gilded officers, we can be certain of this: the key backers of the Freedom Train campaign have nothing in common with the basic citizens of our country—those who create the goods and wealth of our powerful nation. Nobody can convince us that the NAM, the Chamber of Commerce, that Mr. Aldrich, president of the Chase National Bank, mean it when they say "Hail the Constitution and the Bill of Rights!" If they do, why did they sponsor the slave-labor law of Taft and Hartley? Is the Bill of Rights much more than a scrap of paper to Tom Clark, whose days and nights are taken nowadays with hounding progressives, liberals, labor leaders, Communists? What does the First Amendment mean to President Truman, who has put one man, the Attorney General, in charge of the meaning of "loyalty"? Should not every thoughtful American stop a moment and ask himself what's going on here? Should he not suspect that under cover of this campaign for "democracy" the most powerful interests mean to undermine democracy? They did not forget the lesson that expert on tyranny, Huey Long, taught, who said shrewdly that if fascism were to come to America it would come in the guise of anti-fascism, in the trappings of democracy.

NO THOUGHTFUL American can ignore the tragic irony in the fact that it was Sen. Edward Martin, Republican, of Pennsylvania, who dedicated the train in Philadelphia at the outset of the journey. Senator Martin was recently proposed as a presidential candidate by John O'Donnell, of

the New York *Daily News*—the O'Donnell who received the Iron Cross from President Roosevelt for his disservices to a nation at war against fascism. What pleased the *News* spokesman was his hero's rabid diatribe against veterans who fought for our country and who were Communists.

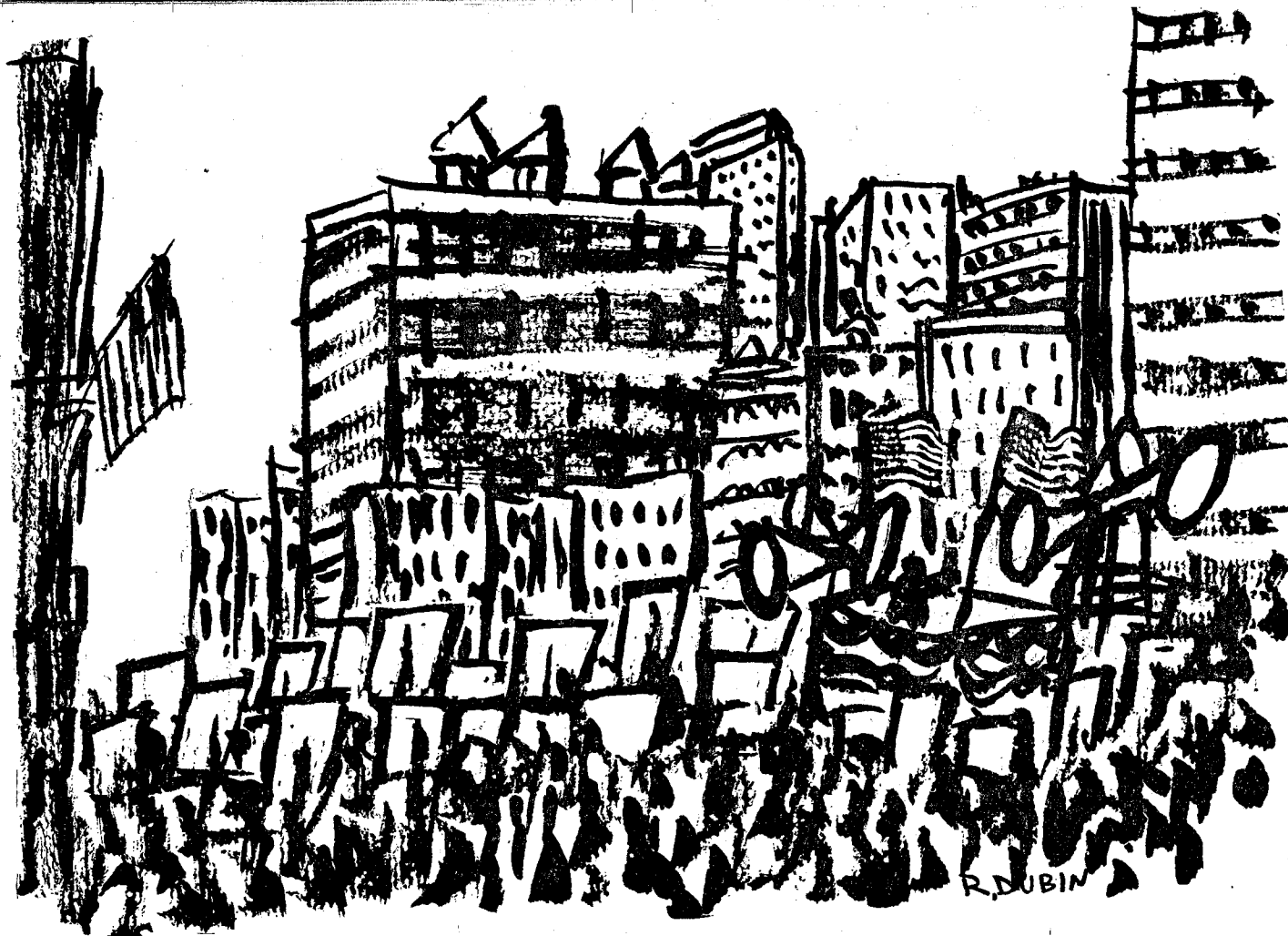
Martin learned the lesson well from Der Fuehrer: that the Red bogey is fascism's ace secret weapon. And this is a lesson not at all ignored by his big business colleagues. For, as the basic policy statement of the Foundation declared: "The menace of totalitarianism of the Right has been succeeded by the threat of totalitarianism from the Left." This should be a tip-off on the purposes of the key sponsors. Every man who speaks for labor's rights, or who defends the Negro people, or who seeks good relations with the Soviet Union, or who wants public ownership of our nation's basic resources, is to be branded the menace.

We remind these gentlemen it was Philip Murray who said that the passage of the Taft-Hartley Act represented a big step toward fascism. And that the nation was primarily threatened by the money-hungry corporations. Hence every discerning American must spurn the illusion the big business sponsors seek to sow, that they are part of a national unity around the Constitution on this, its 160th anniversary. Actually, in every deed—price gouging, war-mongering, Red-baiting—they labor to undermine the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

We believe all Americans worthy the name must realize these plain facts of life: must work truly to convert the Freedom Train's journey into a reaffirmation of these great documents. America has a pledge of rededication, yes: it is to repeal the Taft-Hartley Act, it is to restore civil liberties, it is to halt the formation of a police state. These issues must become the order of the day at every whistle-stop on this Freedom Train route. That is the reason for this special number. NM will continue to focus attention on the issues evolved by the Freedom Train's journey.—THE EDITORS.

Two weeks' notice is requested for change of address. Notification sent to NEW MASSES rather than the Post Office will give the best results. Vol. LXV, No. 1. Published weekly by THE NEW MASSES, INC., 104 E. 9th Street, New York 3, N. Y. Copyright, 1947, THE NEW MASSES, INC. Reg. U. S. Patent Office. Drawings and text may not be reprinted without permission. Entered as second-class matter June 23, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies 15 cents. Subscriptions \$6.00 a year in U. S. and Possessions and Mexico; six months \$3.50; three months \$2.00. Foreign, \$7.00 a year; six months \$4.00; three months \$2.25. In Canada \$6.50 a year, \$4.00 for six months, U. S. money; single copies in Canada 20 cents Canadian money. NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers and artists. Manuscripts and drawings must be accompanied by stamped, addressed envelope.

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THE BILL OF RIGHTS IS BED-ROCK

by Richard O. Boyer

IF THERE is any common denominator to democratic Americans it is the bed-rock conviction that any man anywhere has the right and duty to express his most fundamental beliefs no matter whom they offend or outrage. This is the essence of the First Amendment, the heart and crux of the American tradition, and as long as the ideas advocated do not violate the law, there is no exception to the amendment. Congress and the courts have been forever enjoined from abridging this right of absolute freedom of opinion, discussion and belief. It is to defend this basic right that Eugene Dennis, secretary of the Communist Party of the United States, risks his freedom. He faces a year in prison for his insistence that the Rankin Un-American Committee has been violating the First Amendment by its attempt to dictate what Americans shall think and what Americans shall say.

Here, surely, is holy ground which Americans can never surrender save at their peril. Here, surely, is a stand around

which all Americans can and must rally. If they turn their backs on this struggle, manifestly crucial in the context of contemporary history, they have surrendered that basic, fundamental right for which thousands of Americans have died in the past and which is our only guarantee for a democratic future. This is the point at which to fight. This is the issue on which all Americans must join or be forever apostate to the American dream. This is the time and this is the place and this is the cause for which all Americans who will *ever* fight must fight or must say, "We surrender without fighting."

Only to the gulled will it come as a surprise that the Communists are among the staunchest defenders of the Constitution and its Bill of Rights. To a Communist, writing this is a little like insisting that the world is round. Yet in a society which shouts that black is white, that advocacy of socialism is treason, that preparations for war are preparations for peace, and that profiteering is a holy expression of

Nothing would so surely destroy the substance of what the Bill of Rights protects than its perversion to prevent social progress. The surest protection of the individual and of minorities is that fundamental tolerance and feeling for fair play which the Bill of Rights assumes.

—Franklin D. Roosevelt.

the American ideal, the self-evident has been so obscured that it cannot be sufficiently reiterated. The paper curtain that is the press has deliberately hidden the truth. For years the constitution of the American Communist Party has enjoined upon its members defense of the Constitution of the United States from its enemies at home and abroad. For years the Party constitution has provided for expulsion of anyone advocating force and violence and for years the constitution of the Communist Party has advocated an ultimate socialism only as the result of the free and democratic choice of the American people.

The Supreme Court of the United States ruled in 1943 in the *Schneiderman* case that in the Court's belief Communists were loyal to the Constitution of the United States. The worst thing that can be said about Communists, and still remain within the bounds of truth, is that they favor socialism. The worst thing that can be said about socialism, and still remain within the limits of accuracy, is that it provides for the people's ownership of the nation's resources. This is a fact as gravity is a fact and it will remain a fact although Red-baiting mounts to the stratosphere. It is equally true that one cannot advocate outlawing the ideas expressed by Communists, or the right of Americans to be Communists, or anything else they wish to be without violating the law, without also outlawing the First Amendment and the fundamental idea upon which this nation was founded. And after that the deluge. For if Communists are beyond the pale, then those who sympathize with them are also beyond the provisions of the First Amendment, and with that beginning there is no end.

THIS nation was founded by dissent and it has grown great through the efforts of those often called radicals. It has prospered through the lives of those who were willing to face death or jail for their convictions. It has progressed because of men who valued their integrity more than their freedom. It has advanced because of those who prized the independence of their convictions above a sterile caution and an emasculating conformity. Those who favored the American Revolution before it was popular were called traitors by many of their compatriots. They did not cower and remain silent but with a splendid vitality, with a genuine capacity for living, they organized the political movements that won their liberty. Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, Samuel Adams, Thomas Jefferson and a host of others risked hanging; those who are silent now might think of the hairy rope which burns the flesh as it strangles before they again dare to mention their ancestors. Early trade unionists a century ago were said to be foreign conspirators importing a hateful foreign idea. It cannot be too often recalled that thousands of Jeffersonians were said to be foreign agents financed by French revolutionary gold. The mildest epithet hurled at the Abolitionists was traitor.

"The founding fathers, fresh from a revolution," wrote Justice Murphy in the *Schneiderman* decision, "did not [in writing the Constitution] forge a straitjacket for future generations." Rather the very heart of their effort was the guarantee that all ideas at all times were to be permitted to compete in the marketplace of thought and that Congress should make no law abridging the right of any American to the free expression of his convictions. It is Eugene Dennis, the Communist, and not a banker or a Hearst, a monopolist or a Pegler or a member of the National Association of Manufacturers, who is risking his liberty that this right may be retained by the American people. He was offered the



"The Masses."

"What's he been doin'?" "Overthrowin' the gubment."

opportunity to gain his freedom and purge himself of contempt by withdrawing his challenge to the constitutionality of the Rankin Committee, but he refused it. "My own liberty," he said to the court, "is dear to me but the liberty of the American people is still more dear."

In the brief appealing his case, Dennis cites a series of quotations which should form a testament of faith for all Americans. He calls the quotations "the essence of our democratic traditions." Some of the quotations follow:

"If there be any among us who wish to dissolve this Union, or to change its republican form, let them stand undisturbed, as monuments of the safety with which error of opinion may be tolerated where reason is left free to combat it."

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

"There is tonic in the things that men do not love to hear; and there is damnation in the things that wicked men love to hear. Free speech is to a great people what winds are to oceans and malarial regions, which waft away the elements of disease, and bring new elements of health; and where free speech is stopped miasma is bred, and death comes fast."

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

"This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

"No matter whose the lips that would speak, they must be free and ungagged. The community which does not protect its humblest and most hated member in the free utterance of his opinions, no matter how false or hateful, is only a gang of slaves. If there is anything in the universe that can't stand discussion let it crack."

WENDELL PHILLIPS.

"The constitutional right of free speech has been declared to be the same in peace and in war. In peace, too, men may differ widely as to what loyalty to our country demands; and an intolerant majority, swayed by passion or by fear, may be prone in the future, as it has often been in the past, to stamp as disloyal opinions with which it disagrees. Convictions such as these, besides abridging freedom of speech, threaten freedom of thought and of belief."

LOUIS D. BRANDEIS.

"Our institutions were not devised to bring about uniformity of opinion; if they had been, we might well abandon hope. It is important to remember, as has been said, that the essential characteristic of true liberty is, that under its shelter many different types of life and character and opinion and belief can develop unmolested and unobstructed."

CHARLES E. HUGHES.

"If in the long run the beliefs expressed in proletarian dictatorship are destined to be accepted by the dominant forces of the community, the only meaning of free speech is that they should be given their chance and have their way."

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

"The threat to democracy lies, in my opinion, not so much in revolutionary change, achieved by force or violence. Its greatest danger comes through gradual invasion of constitutional rights with the acquiescence of an inert people, through failure to discern that constitutional government cannot survive where the rights guaranteed by the Constitution are not safeguarded even to those citizens with whose political and social views the majority may not agree."

HERBERT H. LEHMAN.

"The authors of the First Amendment knew that novel and unconventional ideas might disturb the complacent, but they chose to encourage a freedom which they believed essential if vigorous enlightenment was ever to triumph over slothful ignorance."

HUGO L. BLACK.

"Those who begin coercive elimination of dissent soon find themselves exterminating dissenters. Compulsory unification of opinion achieves only the unanimity of the graveyard. . . . But freedom to differ is not limited to things that do not matter much. That would be a mere shadow of freedom. The test of its substance is the right to differ as to things that touch the heart of the existing order."

"If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein."

ROBERT H. JACKSON.

Now there are those who ask how American Communists can be for civil liberties here when they haven't any in Russia. The question is a form of interrogative libel. It implies, in the first place, that American Communists are the creatures of Moscow and cannot favor anything for the United States that is not in force in Russia. It ignores the fact, in the second place, that the Soviet citizen is guaranteed not only full civil liberties, but the right to a job, the right to freedom from the scourge of unemployment, the right to education, the right to leisure, security in old age and in sickness and security against discrimination because of race, religion or sex. In addition, it also ignores the fact that socialism in Russia is the product of Russian history and Russian conditions, while the American present—as will be its socialist future—is the product of a past which contains, among other things, democratic elements found in the history of no other people.

History, a stern and factual teacher whose lessons cannot be entirely disregarded, will prove to the American people, as it has to the people of France, China and Spain, that Communists are among the staunchest patriots. It is, in a historical sense, inevitable that American Communists defend the Bill of Rights, for the socialism they advocate goes beyond the limitations of capitalist democracy. Communists always wish to conserve the best in the past and present as an aid in building a better future. Since the *Communist Manifesto* of 1847, Communists have always and everywhere defended the rights of the people. They defended the people's rights during the European revolutions of 1848. They defended them during the American Civil War when they fought for preservation of the union and the emancipation of the Negro people. They defended and immeasurably enlarged the rights of the Russian people when they defeated Czarist feudalism and moved to a socialism which more than any other single factor rescued the world from Nazi slavery. They fought for the Spanish people against Franco. They fought for the people's freedom, when the price of defeat was death, in the anti-Nazi undergrounds of France,

Poland, Norway and all of Europe. They fight for the people's freedom and national independence now in China, France, Greece, Italy, Indonesia, the Philippines, India, Brazil and all the world around.

It is inevitable that American Communists fight for the Bill of Rights since it's a democratic document and the Communists are a democratic movement. When the Bill of Rights prospers the Communists and all other progressive Americans prosper. When the Bill of Rights is negated fascism and reaction gain. Fascists neither need nor require the bill's provisions to advocate their racial violence. Their constant aim is to nullify and abrogate it. They are aided and abetted by those monopolists who wish to transform the Bill of Rights into little more than a glorification of profiteering, into a club bludgeoning Americans into acquiescence to a crude imperialism abroad and thought-control at home.

But the lifeblood of American democracy is freedom of belief, freedom of opinion, freedom for dissent. Without the First Amendment America can neither progress nor avert an American brand of fascism. If the First Amendment is destroyed, American democracy is destroyed. Without it the American dream is dead. Eugene Dennis is fighting to retain the First Amendment and surely here all American democrats can join to save a worthy past and guarantee a democratic future. This, if any place, is the place to fight.



Bill Richards

PORTSIDE PATTERN

Philadelphia, Pa.—The Freedom Train will carry historic documents to all forty-eight states. The people of the South will be given the opportunity to see the Bill of Rights they've heard so much about.

Washington, D.C.—It is hoped that the engineer on the Freedom Train has more success in keeping the Constitution on the right track than some members of the Supreme Court.

New York, N. Y.—The Freedom Train will be accompanied by an honor guard of troops. Citizens who have any complaint about their freedom are invited to tell it to the Marines.

Biloxi, Miss.—It was announced that children will be given time off from school to see the Freedom Train. White children will be off from 9-3 and colored children from 3-4.

Columbus, Ohio—A leading Republican Senator today charged the CIO with sneaking propaganda aboard the Freedom Train. He objected to the line "in order to form a more perfect union" which he claimed appeared in one of the documents.

Howard Fast

ONE MAN'S HERITAGE

HERITAGE is a peculiar thing, for there are the disinherited as well as the inheritors; there are those who break wills; and there are those who dishonor the men who build and store and set aside. And often enough, when the will is probated, there are those who sow confusion in plenty.

The American heritage is no simple thing. There is a clause which John Brown wrote, to wit: "I leave you courage and high honor. I leave you the right to hate and oppose what is unjust and evil. I leave you the injunction to speak your thoughts—to die rather than see your brother in slavery."

So do I read it in the general will, written out of the public weal and good; but there are those who read it otherwise. There are those who probate on the basis of Robert Rogers, whose "Rangers" made a record for blood-lust and infamy during the Revolution of '76. It was Rogers who said, "I have no mercy for patriots, no courts, no trials, but only a noose." Is he part of our heritage? Did he write in the general will: "Dishonor, I leave to all Americans. To them I leave tortures unspeakable, cruelty and hatred for all that is good and decent"?

They are both in our heritage, but who was the American in the best sense of the word? Which is the American heritage, the heritage of Robert Rogers, or the heritage of John Brown? And who is the American? Is John Rankin of Mississippi an American? It is true that this good American earth nurtured John Rankin; but it is the same earth that nurtured Benedict Arnold. Do we take our heritage

from Benedict Arnold, who said so glibly, at the fiercest moment of the Hamiltonian reaction: "... so many of my countrymen have shaken off their delusion, as I predicted they would eighteen years ago"?

How naturally the phrase "my countrymen" falls from the lips of this arch-traitor! How casually the word *un-American* drops from the lips of John Rankin!

Was liberty a delusion? Was freedom a chimera? Is the American heritage the heritage of Benedict Arnold? Who is an American in the best, the finest sense of the word? Is it John Rankin, or Edward K. Barsky, whom he would imprison? Can both of these men, the first so evil, so apparent, so tireless in his attacks against all that is best in our lives, the second so unselfish, so devoted to that curious quality we call *freedom*—can both of these men reflect the American heritage?

THE answer to the last is yes; for like all things, all processes, all life and all organizations of life, America grew out of many contradictions. Born in revolution, there were those forces within the army of revolution itself that turned upon the revolution and prevented its consummation until the time of Jefferson. Hailed as the first land of liberty, America contained within itself, even at the very beginning, that cancer of all freedom, human slavery. Setting forth the ideal of individual right and liberty, America proceeded to exterminate thousands of Indians, who also believed in the rights of the individual. One could go on and on, listing and expounding these contradictions out of which America arose; one could also point out how these contradictions existed in individuals, such as Washington and Jefferson, and Lincoln too, and so many others.

But the important factor is this: until this day, howsoever long and terrible the struggle, *it was the heritage of freedom and democracy that emerged dominant and triumphant.* A John Brown did not die in vain; a great war was fought and human slavery in the South was smashed. An Albert

They Red-baited Abe Lincoln, too. From a Currier & Ives print, October 1860. (Courtesy NY Public Library.)



Parsons did not die in vain, for in their militant might, organized labor fought for and won the eight-hour day. Sacco and Vanzetti did not die in vain; the great organizational march of the CIO and the AFL gave them to immortality. And wherever men struggle for freedom, march on the picketline, battle to organize, the mighty shadow of Gene Debs is with them.

THIS heritage, the heritage of freedom and democracy, is the part of the American heritage which the people chose. The Bill of Rights is a part of that heritage today because in his struggle to destroy it, Grover Cleveland was frustrated by organized labor. We still live in a democracy because the people backed Jefferson against the merchant princes of his time. We live under the American Constitution because the people supported Jackson in his struggle to save that constitution. Again and again, the American people have been faced with a choice between the heritage of Benedict Arnold and the heritage of Thomas Jefferson; again and again they have chosen the heritage of freedom.

Rankin can and does claim the American heritage. He probates a very ancient will: Cotton Mather, who burned the witches, is his direct forebear, and Arnold and Burr and Hamilton and Wilkinson left him proofs of what they considered to be American. In his heritage, no doubt, is that fine American act of John Wilkes Booth. A whole class of overseers, slave-traders and plantation owners were, part of the American heritage—for those who fall so low as to emulate them. Grover Cleveland, Mark Hanna, Rutherford B. Hayes, Powderly, Pinkerton—how many more are there to add to the gallery of infamy? There is a great listing of those the “un-Americans” can claim.

But there are millions whom we can claim—and whom we do claim. For it is because of those millions that we are here today; they fought the good fight; they left us a heritage of victory, honor and democracy. *They are our American heritage.*

I HEAR that a Freedom Train starts off, and that within it are many noble documents. These are the same documents that we fight to implement today; they are the same documents that our ancestors died to preserve.

Let us understand that the men behind the Freedom Train, the Trumans and the Tafts and the Hartleys and the Rankins—let us understand that these men, in hideous desperation, are paying lip service to that which they fear most—the blueprints of liberty. They act with a cunning knowledge that a document in itself is nothing; that freedom is in the hands of men and women who implement such documents. Therefore they seize upon the documents, claim them and enunciate the reaction of today in terms of the Bill of Rights and the American Constitution.

I fear they are doomed to failure. These documents are the heritage of the American people, bought with blood and paid for in like coin. The deep-rooted heritage of the Rankins and the Tafts flowered elsewhere—in the cesspool that was Nazism and fascism.



A meeting to protest the conviction and sentencing to jail of Howard Fast because he and ten other members of the executive board of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee refused to knuckle under to the House Un-American Committee will be held Thursday evening, October 16, at Manhattan Center, New York. Prominent writers and artists will address the meeting, which is being sponsored by NEW MASSES and Mainstream.—THE EDITORS.

Herbert Aptheker

NO JIM CROW ON FREEDOM'S TRAIN

A YEAR ago I was in the town auditorium of Columbia, South Carolina's capital city, listening with four thousand others to the songs of Paul Robeson. He sang in many tongues. Some songs were wistful and sad, some were bitter and defiant, some were humorous and buoyant, but through them all ran a single dominant refrain. And in his brief, tender, stirring talk to his people Robeson put this refrain into precise words. He lifted himself to his full magnificent height and spread his arms until he seemed to be embracing each of us and all of us, and in his vibrant voice he said: *We will be free!*

Surely, I thought, this cry bestirred the spirits of the ancestors of Robeson and his auditors. I could see and hear them. Here were the slaves of 1712 plotting for freedom and “tying themselves to Secrecy by Sucking ye blood of each Other's hand”; here were the leaders of an uprising of 1730 who, being overpowered and captured, “were put to the torture of burning matches; which, though several times repeated, could not bring them to make any confession”; here were the dozens who, nine years later, not far from where Robeson stood, “called out Liberty, marched on with Colours displayed and two Drums beating.”

I could see one Negro writing another in the last years of the eighteenth century: “Don't be feared have a good heart fight brave and we will get free”; and back from the first years of the next century came the words of another: “Freedom we want and will have.”

There was Gabriel, slaye of one Prosser, inspirer of thousands of Virginia Negroes whose slogan was “death or liberty,” being questioned by Governor James Monroe—but refusing to say a word and accepting the first alternative. And look upon Peter Poyas, Vesey's right-hand man, chained to a prison-floor and crying out to a comrade being tortured, “Die silent, as you shall see me do!”

Here is the slaveholders' own press admitting of one martyr: “Not a muscle moved when the verdict of death was pronounced”; and of several upon the gallows: “They maintained to the last, the utmost firmness”; and of still another: “The instant before the trap was sprung, he exclaimed, ‘Death—death at any time in preference to slavery!’”

With the cry “Freedom—Free Land” Negroes taunted those who beat them. One unnamed hero, in Tennessee in 1856, told the men whipping him to “lay on harder, my friends hear each blow I receive”—and he received seven hundred and fifty blows and died in a pool of blood.

This tells but a fraction of the story. Always and everywhere, struggle; and surely, irresistibly, progress.

Robeson, the magnificent artist, expressing the torment and the spirit of resistance of the Negro, made me think of other Negro artists and how they had evolved variegated

images with which to express the unspeakable crucifixion of their people. To Richard Wright, in the days of his righteous wrath, the prison-house of the Negro appeared like one huge iron cage; to the great Du Bois the walls that bind and enclose were of glass behind which the Negro incessantly pounded and without which the passersby strode on heedlessly; to the talented Theodore Ward the obstacle appeared as a "big white fog."

Each of these images contains truths and all of them together are true. What is the magic key that can unlock so strange and forbidding a prison—part iron, part glass, part fog? What is the instrument that can break down—once and for all—these walls reared upon the history of three hundred years and based upon the profits and the power to be derived from the enslavement of fourteen million human beings?

THERE is but one answer and no other, and that answer is militant, organized mass struggle to be waged by a united and an aroused people. Alone and separated we are as inconsequential and as frothy as the sea's white-caps; together and united we are as mighty and as irresistible as the ocean's tides.

Deep within their guts the people—black and white, North and South—know this and have always known it. Some twenty years ago a North Carolina white woman textile worker sang (until they murdered her—but not her song):

*We're going to have a union all over the South,
Where we can wear good clothes and live in a better house.
Now we must stand together and to the boss reply
We'll never, no, we'll never let our unions die.*

We who understand the indivisibility of true freedom, the identity of interests of all the common people of the world, and the immortality of those people, possess an unquenchable confidence. We know that neither slander nor illegality nor torture nor crematoria will keep the people of this earth from their inheritance of peace and dignity, of "good clothes and a better house."

The Lucres of the world may own Fortune, but they possess Time and Life in name only. This explains their haste and their desperation. Time and Life belong to us. And we have found the key, the magic key, that opens wide all prisons, build them as they will: *We'll never, no, we'll never let our unions die!*

Paul Robeson, bespeaking the yearnings and the wisdom of the people, spoke the truth: *we will be free.*



FIORIELLO H. LA GUARDIA

The following telegram was sent by Joseph North to Mr. La Guardia's widow: "Please accept condolences of editors of NEW MASSES magazine on death of your distinguished husband. Fiorello La Guardia was one of the great progressives of our time. He will be remembered as co-author of Norris-La Guardia Act when authors of Taft-Hartley Act will long since have been engulfed in the wrath of an aroused people."

S. W. Gerson is writing a special article on La Guardia for NM which will appear next week.

A. B. Magil

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A CONFUSION of tongues has enveloped the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. In the language of reaction they mean one thing, in the language of progress another. It is unconstitutional, we are told, to enforce the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution which provides: "The right of the citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude." And similarly we are told that the Bill of Rights applies to all citizens except Communists, a term used to describe anyone from a member of the Communist Party to a person of no party who voted for Roosevelt.

But the Constitution and the Bill of Rights have proved sturdier protectors of the people's liberties than had been anticipated by those who hoped they could be used as reaction's Trojan horse. A new tactic of ominous meaning has now been devised. Outright amendment of the Bill of Rights was demanded by the recent American Legion convention—in effect, outright annulment of the great historic document which was written into our Constitution in 1791 as a result of the struggles of the common people, whose leaders were branded the Reds of their day.

The battle unfolding around the Constitution and the Bill of Rights drives to the roots of the democratic concept. The central problem of democracy is the problem of power. Principles, constitutions, laws derive their meaning from the power context in which they operate. Power for the few or the many, for the elite or the common people, for the reactionary or the progressive forces of society—which is hammer and which anvil—the issue is as naked as that if democracy is not to be a phrase, a vain hope or a trap. And the base of the pyramid of power is economic. Those who govern in economics govern in politics and directly or indirectly in all other spheres.

The inseparable connection between politics and economics is not an "alien idea" or an invention of the Marxists, though to the Marxists belongs the credit of exploring this relationship scientifically and revealing it in its dynamic fullness. Some thirty years before the birth of Karl Marx James Madison in No. 10 of *The Federalist* essays wrote: "... the most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property. Those who hold and those who are without property have ever formed distinct interests in society. Those who are creditors and those who are debtors fall under a like discrimination. A landed interest, a manufacturing interest, a mercantile interest, with many lesser interests, grow up of necessity in civilized nations, and divide them into classes, actuated by different sentiments and views. The regulation of these various and interfering interests forms the principal task of modern legislation, and involves the spirit of party and faction in the necessary and ordinary operations of the government."

Shocking though such ideas may be to the gentlemen of the NAM, they were virtually axiomatic among the founding fathers and are an ineradicable part of the American heritage.

Note that only in the last sentence that I have quoted, in which Madison touches on the character of the state, do the limitations of his class outlook and of the social science of his day blur reality. For him government was a regulator of contending class interests, but he failed to probe the nature of its "regulation." It remained for later revolutionary thinkers, Marx, Engels and Lenin, aided by the work of a great American anthropologist of the nineteenth century, Lewis Henry Morgan, to show that the primary character of government is to safeguard and advance the interests of the dominant class or classes at the expense of other classes; that for this purpose it must organize what Engels called "a public force"—a coercive power; that, in other words, so long as conflicting classes exist, all government, even the freest, is an instrument of class suppression. Where the people are in power, this means of course that the anti-democratic minority is curbed.

THE convention which wrote the American Constitution gave advance confirmation of this view of the state. Virtually all the delegates were drawn from the well-to-do propertied classes, and since the sessions were secret, they felt free to expound those conceptions of government which the authors of *The Federalist* papers did not find it expedient to display publicly. The end-product of their deliberations, the Constitution of the United States, was cast in the mold of checks against what Hamilton called "the imprudence of democracy" and balances against the potential power of those with little property or none at all.

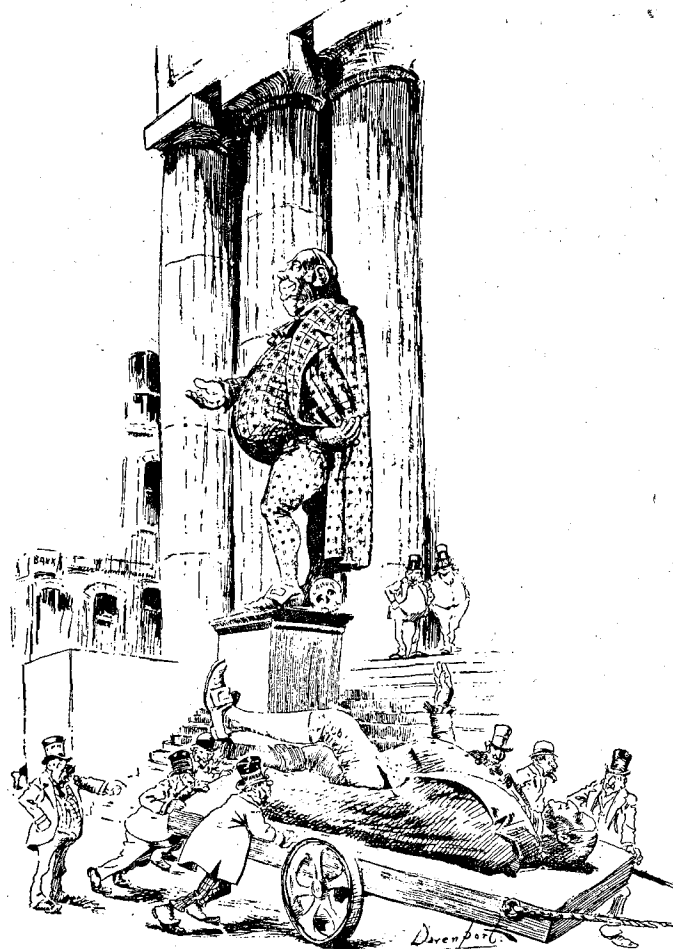
To say this and no more, in the manner of the debunking school of American historians, is, however, to touch the skeleton and miss the flesh and blood. The American republic and its Constitution—which has proved to be a more flexible instrument than its authors intended—were products of a great democratic process that is still far from complete. They represented a huge stride forward not only in relation to the past, but also in the sense that they made possible future advance: without them and without the unified, independent American nation which brought them into being, the industrialization of the country, the eradication of slavery, the rise of the labor movement and other progressive developments would have been seriously retarded. Thus, not only 1776, but also 1787, 1789 and 1791, with all their bourgeois limitations, constitute one of the epochal stages in mankind's ascent to freedom.

ALMOST every Sunday in the financial section of the New York Times one Russell Porter writes a homily on the virtues of the American system of "free enterprise" and chides the benighted Europeans who have embraced "socialistic" or "cartelized" systems. To Porter and others dazzled by the might of American capitalism ours is a unique economic system different in kind from those of Britain and France. Stalin is of course one of those Marxist illiterates who, as Harold Stassen makes clear, doesn't even know that "free enterprise" *a la* du Pont and the German economic system *a la* IG Farben had nothing in common.

False and fatuous though these apologies for American big business are, there is a grain of truth buried in them. American capitalism did develop under uniquely favorable conditions that made possible its present mammoth power.

Unique too is our democratic heritage, fruit both of capitalism in its early progressive phase and of the struggle against capitalist evils.

Marxists have often pointed to the unusual advantages enjoyed by American capitalism from its earliest origins: the almost complete absence of feudal relations, the undeveloped and fluid class pattern of colonial and post-revolutionary society, the vast expanse of unsettled land, the wealth of natural resources, the pioneer population into which poured ever fresh immigrant streams. All these ad-



"Wall Street's New Guardian," by Homer Davenport, 1899. J. P. Morgan is shown directing a crew of bankers removing Washington's statue. Replacing it on the pedestal is Mark Hanna, GOP boss, clad in a dollar-sign suit.

vantages also nourished our democracy. And one other factor should be noted whose influence on our democratic development has received insufficient attention: the weakness of the coercive power of the early capitalist state.

In *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Frederick Engels in discussing the emergence of "a public force" as a distinguishing characteristic of every state, wrote: "This public force exists in every state; it consists not merely of armed men, but also of material appendages, prisons and coercive institutions of all kinds. . . . It may be very insignificant, practically negligible, in societies with still undeveloped class antagonisms and living in remote areas, as at times and in places in the United States of America."

The fact is that, in contrast to European countries, not till after the Civil War and especially in the twentieth century did the coercive power of the American state become

fully developed. This situation favored the growth of democracy through the self-assertion of the masses, and their struggles in turn helped prevent the establishment of any durable despotic government. It is significant that in the very act of consolidating their state power after the Revolution the big merchants and landowners found it necessary to grant a Bill of Rights to avoid a national repetition of Shays' Rebellion in Massachusetts. This reflected a weakness out of which democracy drew strength. Lacking a standing army and federal police and espionage systems, and with various powers reserved to the individual states, the ruling classes were compelled to move cautiously. And when they attempted under John Adams to impose an autocratic regime through the Alien and Sedition Acts, they roused an avalanche that swept their Federalist Party into oblivion and brought the democratic masses to power under the leadership of Jefferson.

Only the Negro slaves benefited little from this relatively uncoercive early American state: their masters usually had adequate means of their own to enforce the most brutal conditions of servitude. However, the democratic struggles of the white farmers, artisans and workers for many years contributed indirectly to the Negroes' own unceasing fight for liberation until the rise of industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century made that fight the cause of the nation.

DESPITE Negro slavery and the horrors of labor exploitation that attended the rise of industry, the forty years from Jefferson's first administration to the ascension of John Tyler in 1841, when the slavocracy captured the executive branch of the government, marked (except in the South) the golden age of bourgeois democracy in America. And it is not an accident that this period saw the emergence of an intellectual life and a literature of extraordinary quality. Yet it is significant too that it was in this time of its full flower that the limitations of democracy on a capitalist basis first became evident and the first tentative blossoms of a higher democracy came into view. The economic foundation of our democracy—small, individual agricultural production—was already being undermined by privately-owned, increasingly corporate, large-scale industrial production. And before that advancing giant some of the best minds of America, as well as large numbers of organized workers, recoiled and sought refuge in utopian experiments. "Socialism and communism," wrote Karl Marx one hundred years ago, "did not originate in Germany, but in England, France and North America." The movements here attracted the adherence in varying degree of men and women like Horace Greeley, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Albert Brisbane, Margaret Fuller, Wendell Phillips and Elizabeth Peabody. And though every American newspaper reader today knows that labor parties are "alien" to the American tradition, it is a fact that what was probably the first labor party in the world was born in Philadelphia in 1828. All this too is part of our democratic heritage.

Out of corporate industry, which in the late nineteenth century developed into monopolistic finance-capital, grew a new tyranny—the tyranny of a money power whose government was no longer weak in the art of coercion—and with it grew a new, unprecedented train of abuses. Leadership in the battle for democracy necessarily passed from the hands of the sons and grandsons of "the embattled farmers" into those of the working men and women of America. Today every housewife feels this big business despotism

when she goes to the store to buy food for her family. Every worker feels it in the meagerness of his wage, in the iron fist of the Taft-Hartley law, in the haunting shadow of unemployment. Every dirt farmer and every small business man and professional feels it. And every Negro feels it most of all.

The true power relations in America today are no mystery. Back in 1930 James W. Gerard, former ambassador to Germany and himself a prominent financier, dramatized their substance when he made public a list of the sixty-four men who rule America. All of them were big capitalists, with the exception of two labor leaders, William Green and Matthew Woll. (Interestingly enough, no public official, not even the President of the United States, Herbert Hoover, was included.) Mr. Gerard is a reactionary today and was certainly no liberal in 1930; his testimony is therefore all the more impressive.

WHAT shall we say, then, when a liberal, John Gunther, comes along and revises Mr. Gerard's list, not in the sense of substituting new business tycoons for those who may have died or lost their former influence, but in the sense of rejecting the Gerard thesis that big business rules America? Mr. Gunther's list, presented in the September issue of '47 magazine, is catholic if not cogent. All sorts of people make the grade, with Harry Truman the number one man. Among the Senators listed is the dissident Republican, Wayne Morse of Oregon, who hasn't much influence in his own party, but according to Gunther, is one of the rulers of America. Another "ruler" is Henry A. Wallace. Also included are eight labor leaders and men like Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, R. B. Creager of Texas, "as an example of a



"The Sower," by Art Young.

Republican boss in the South," Governor Robert F. Bradford of Massachusetts, and Mayor James M. Curley of Boston, now a non-paying guest of the United States government (the mayor of New York doesn't rate). When he is about two-thirds down his list, Gunther suddenly remembers that there are also capitalists in this country. He names twelve, including a few big ones, though not including any du Pont or a representative of the Mellon interests. In fact, before one is through with the Gunther list it becomes clear that he himself has forgotten what he set out to prove or disprove, and instead of presenting the men who rule America in any decisive sense, he has distributed honorary awards to interesting and influential public figures. The grave of James Madison must be in turmoil at such liberal confusion.

It is refreshing to turn from the Gunther fog to the clear-visioned statement of another liberal, Henry Wallace. In his recent speech at Madison Square Garden he named the bankers and industrialists who now hold key posts in the government. He urged a struggle against what he called "reactionary monopolistic capitalism" and projected the idea that a third party might become a necessary weapon in that struggle. At the same time Mr. Wallace does not yet accept the full implications of this battle for democracy. "Americans do not have to choose between capitalism and socialism," he said; "but we do have to choose between progressive capitalism and the reactionary monopolistic capitalism which is trying to strangle freedom both at home and abroad." In the same speech he pointed out that "there are not many progressive capitalists," but he expressed the belief that they, "together with leaders of organized labor and the small farmers hold in their hands the chief possibility for peace, jobs, and freedom."

One can wholeheartedly agree with Mr. Wallace's faith in what an alliance of labor, dirt farmers and small businessmen can achieve without agreeing that the American people will thereby be choosing progressive capitalism or rejecting for all time socialism. Progressive capitalism, we Marxists are convinced, no longer exists nor can it exist. When capitalism entered its final monopoly stage in the latter part of the nineteenth century it became reactionary, imperialist, anti-people to the core. The alliance which Mr. Wallace proposes, and which is imperative to defend living standards and the Bill of Rights and to advance to new democratic frontiers, will sooner or later have to come to grips with monopoly at the centers of its power: banking, steel, coal, utilities, transportation, etc., and place them under public ownership and control.

Mr. Wallace has himself recently spoken up for nationalization of key industries. If this nationalization is to serve the people and not the wealthy owners of securities, it must come not as a bureaucratic dispensation of the Truman administration or any GOP successor, but as part of a process of struggle against Wall Street reaction in which a new people's party and a people's government will be forged. Such shifts in economic and political power will mean not progressive capitalism, but the beginning of capitalism's end. The choice that Americans may not have to make today they will have to make eventually—the sooner, the better—if they are permanently to root out depression and war and bring to our land a new birth of freedom with abundance for all. From the glowing American heritage of the past we look ahead: the unfinished business of democracy is socialism.



Lloyd L. Brown

THE PREACHER WAS A WORKINGMAN

I'VE BEEN thinking a lot lately about Reverend Wheatley. I don't remember his first name—the fellows in the mill just called him "the Reverend"—but I never forgot him. Or what he said.

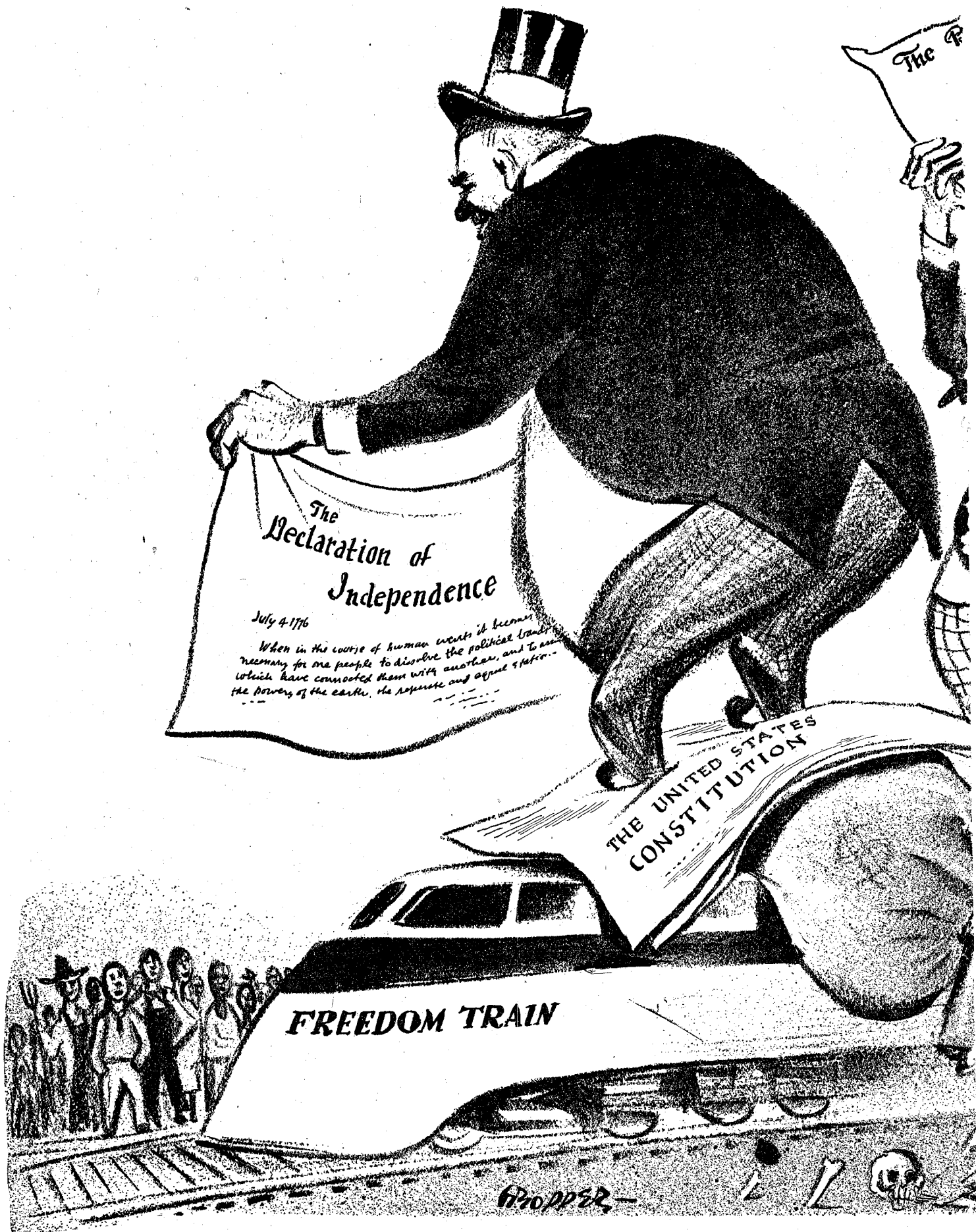
Sometimes the boys tried to kid him about being a preacher and about how funny he looked with his Bible in one overall pocket and a pack of Mail Pouch in the other, bulging out on both sides of his thin frame like saddle-bags. But he didn't mind. He and his two sons had jobs in the open hearth where most of the Negroes worked—there and in the stink of the by-products department where the fumes would make a man's head nearly bust open.

He'd come up from Birmingham, where he had first worked in a steel mill, to pastor at the Good Hope Baptist Church. He really was a preacher but because his flock was poor he worked six days and on the seventh he changed into his frock-coat and preached and prayed with the people out in the Mulberry Hill section of town. It looked funny at first to see him wearing that long dust-colored coat to our meetings, but he always did. And with him always were his sons, as tall and as thin as he was. I don't think they really wanted to come—all they ever talked about was hunting and fishing and their hound-dogs—but they came and sat quietly beside their father. He often said that he wanted his boys to "do right."

At first the meetings were held at someone's house or in the Reverend's church. You didn't talk union in that town—not out loud, not then. Not since '19 when the strike was broken and the mill went on the "American Plan." It was just a company town, no better and no worse than any other in the Mahoning Valley. And over it was spread a fog of fear that hung on like the smoke pall from the mill—the fear of blacklist, the fear of a foreman's displeasure, the fear of company spies, the fear of crippling accidents. Almost every day the red light was lit on the company's safety sign near the main gate, notice that there'd been another accident. And lately there had been a greater dread—fear of the invisible blight that was slowly shutting down the furnaces one by one. So that when men met, instead of asking is it hot enough for you or how's the kids, they asked: how many days did you get in last pay?

Nobody but the Communists would have tried to organize a union under those conditions and old "Grandmother" Mike Tighe of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel & Tin Workers said that we were crazy—when

(Continued on page 14)



Don't Let Them



Rob the Train!

(Continued from page 11)

he didn't say worse. But we believed in Foster; he said it could be done and that it had to be done—and it had to be an industrial union.

It was slow going—very slow. There were thousands of leaflets to be run off on our rickety old mimeograph in the Workers' Hall and passed out at the gates on the 3 to 11, 11 to 7 and 7 to 3 shifts. There was the cautious work of "contacting" and Sunday visiting; the careful recruiting of members and setting up of committees in the various departments of the old mill, which sprawled for miles along the rusty river. And finally, the election of a shop committee for the whole plant, and long meetings discussing grievances, minimum demands, organizing tactics.

THE Reverend was a member of the shop committee. He never said much—usually just a low-voiced "Amen, brother" when something was said that he liked. But he was a good worker—taking leaflets to leave in the toilets, stickers to paste on the sheds and talking union to his people. We knew he was loyal and dependable but nobody thought much about him until that day when he did speak up.

That was when the shop committee met and faced the decision to come out into the open. The long months of agitation and secret organizing had to end in action. In some departments the hotheads were kicking about nothing being done, what good was the union anyway? Grievances were piling up, smouldering like a slag-pile fire. The shop committeemen knew what they had to do and when the delegate from the tube mill backed out another was elected to replace him. They had to go to see the Superintendent—go right into his office in the little red brick building where no worker ever went before. Nobody ever talked to the Super. Even the foremen were in awe of the silver-haired little man who was driven each day across the moat from the highway, into the guarded gate and up the graveled drive to the office door. "C.C." they called him, "old C.C."

Maybe he was just a little satrap to the men who directed the company from the home office in Pittsburgh, a lesser lieutenant at a minor outpost of empire. But here he was the big boss, the Company in person. They said he was mean and rotten when they spoke of him, but nobody really

knew much about him and he was probably cursed a whole lot less than the lowest strawboss.

Certainly nobody had ever dreamed of walking into his office and talking up to him and telling him what the men wanted, what *he* had to do. But the shop committee had to see him and present the demands. The big question was: who was to be the spokesman? When that came up at the meeting the silence in the room was loud—and accusing. Jack, our party section organizer, told me afterwards that for a moment he thought we were licked. That there would be talk of the need for further meetings, "maybe we ought to wait awhile." That the waiting would go on and on until it was too late, until the fear had crushed all hope and killed the union even before it was born.

THEN Reverend Wheatley got up, hesitantly clearing his throat before he spoke. "Gentlemen—brothers—" he corrected, "you know I'm a man of the Lord. I've been doing His work for many a year. I've been battling the Devil and the Lord has given me courage and strength."

A slow, wise smile lined the speaker's face and his long, hard fingers found the book in his pocket. "Now, brothers, you know that the Devil is something to be afraid of, but Mr. C. C. Pike ain't nothing but a man. And from the way he treats folks I'd say he was a mighty sorry man at that! Now I've done a lot of talking and shouting in my time, preaching the Word, and if none of you all wants to be the speaker—and if you all don't mind—I'd like to do a little talking to the man myself."

That's about all he said, but it seemed like a whole lot. Maybe it was because he'd never said so much before, or maybe it was the way he said it, or maybe it was because someone had to say it.

In two days the whole plant knew about what the Reverend said and about the committee writing to the Super for a hearing. Of course, Mr. Pike wouldn't talk to the men, didn't even answer the letter. But the union fought on, won some grievances anyway, and was going strong by the end of summer.

But that October the crash came and by March the plant was almost dead. All furnaces were shut down and only a maintenance crew got any time. The Reverend became one of the leaders of the Unemployed Council and most of the members came into it.

I haven't heard of him in years and I don't know where Reverend Wheatley is nowadays. But as I said before, I've been thinking a lot lately about him. So many people are becoming afraid again. Not afraid of "old C.C."—if he's still living—his mill has been a stronghold of the CIO for over ten years. Now it's the Red-scare. Now it's the FBI and the Un-American Committee. Too many people afraid to talk, afraid to speak up for those who are the targets of the "company men" in Washington. Afraid that if they speak up for Fast and Barsky and Dennis and Eisler—for justice, for democracy, for plain decency—that something terrible will happen to them.

I wish Reverend Brother Wheatley could talk to them, but I don't know where he is. Maybe all of us—members of the shop committee and of the rank and file—ought to speak up as he did. And say that maybe the Devil is something to be afraid of but Rankin ain't nothing but a man—and a mighty sorry one at that! And J. Parnell Thomas and J. Edgar Hoover—mighty sorry men and nothing for a lot of people to be afraid of.



NEXT WEEK IN NM

NEW MASSES is proud to announce that beginning next week a well-known Washington correspondent, veteran of many a press-conference on both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, will begin a column called "D.C. Dateline." He will write in NM under the initials A.L.J. He says: "For years I have had a lot to say that I wanted to say in NM; I am happy now to have this opportunity." Our correspondent's first column will deal with the significant whys and wherefores of the Eisenhower-for-President boomlet: who began it and why.

COMING SOON IN NM: B. A. Botkin, editor of *The Treasury of American Folklore*, and author of other works, has written a special article for us on "Songs in the American Democratic Tradition."

S. Finkelstein

THEIR BOOKS BROKE CHAINS

THE phrase, "democratic tradition in American literature" is almost redundant. Is there any American literature of stature that is not part of the democratic tradition?

Of course the term literature itself has become so all-inclusive today that a new word should be invented to describe the work of Whitman or Melville, and distinguish it from the synthetic publisher concoctions inspired by book clubs and publicity campaigns. Today such books are gravely reviewed in the press as if they were masterpieces, so long as they have a promised advertising campaign behind them. Similarly an Orville Prescott is passed off as a literary critic, a Henry Hazlitt becomes an economist, their only qualification the fact that a prominent newspaper decides to make them so.

If this corruption of literature is called literature, then there will be much that is reactionary found within our lit-

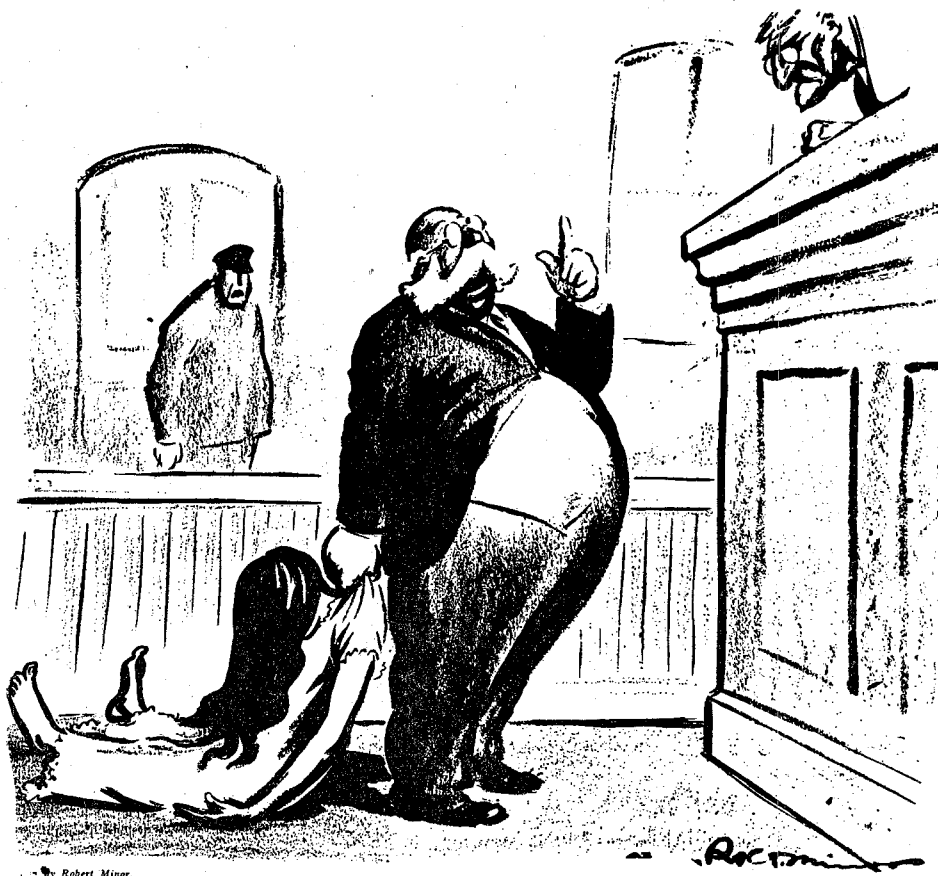
erary heritage. For in the past as well as now there were many who misused verse, prose and the ancient art of storytelling to suit the propaganda needs and obscurantisms of reaction. But such works are dead even as they come from the pen. Can anyone recall a novel of quality which defended the Tories of the Revolutionary War, which attacked the Bill of Rights, which defended slavery and the plantation aristocracy, which found joy in the annexation of the Philippines or in the rise of the great trusts and monopolies?

Let us apply the test to American literature of the attitude to race and oppressed national groups. This problem has been a part of American history from the first days of dealings with Indians, and racial chauvinism attacking one people or another has been an ever-present weapon in the hands of reactionary politicians. Yet Cooper wrote with deep sympathy for the Indian; not perhaps with the utmost accuracy, but morally far in advance of the political practices of his time.

The leading New England and New York writers of the period before the Civil War—Emerson, Thoreau, Bryant, Greeley, Whittier, Lowell—were anti-slavery to a man, and at a time when lynch mobs could be found prowling Northern cities, incited by the bankers and cotton profiteers. Melville, in his *Typee* and *Moo*, wrote of the South Sea islanders with a realistic vision, a complete absence of white chauvinism, that makes these works still acceptable to contemporary anthropologists. In *Moby Dick* he wrote of men of many shades of skin, banded together under conditions in which the only test of a man was his hand, heart and nerve. Prescott described the splendors of the old tribal



"Freedom of the Press," by Art Young. From the old "Masses." Because of this and other exposes of the commercial press "The Masses" was sued for libel by the Associated Press. However, AP wisely decided to drop the complaint.



"Your Honor, this woman gave birth to a naked child!" Robert Minor in "The Masses," 1915. This famous cartoon was a contribution to the fight against the drive on art and literature led by Anti-vice Crusader Comstock. Today that drive is being led by Hearst, who, under the guise of campaigning against "obscenity," would suppress all progressive expression. The recent efforts to suppress Howard Fast's "Citizen Tom Paine," and the State Department's cancellation of the tour abroad of an American art exhibit, are examples of this reactionary trend. Today as throughout its thirty-six-year history NEW MASSES carries on the fight for art and against its enemies.

civilization that had been overthrown by the conquistadors.

Stephen Crane contributed, in his story *The Monster*, one of the most powerful indictments of racial prejudice in our literature. Mark Twain, born in a border state, put in *Huckleberry Finn* the story of a Negro's flight to freedom, and a bitter attack upon the blood-letting Southern plantation feudalism. Eugene O'Neill wrote one of his finest plays, *All God's Chillun Got Wings*, on the problem of Negro and white.

The two outstanding novels of the past year are Sinclair Lewis' *Kingsblood Royal* and Barbara Giles' *The Gentle Bush*. The first ripped to pieces the hypocritical claim that the Negro problem was a Southern one, not a Northern, and laid the indictment for lynch incitement at the door of the rich; the second showed how little the Southern literary genius has in common with the Southern sloganeering politician.

Or let us take the test of the attitude of the American writer to the concentration of financial and industrial power in the hands of a few. Cooper glimpsed these dangers before the Civil War and wrote about them, although he could find none other than a backward-looking solution. Walt Whitman, Mark Twain and Ambrose Bierce exposed the corruption of American politics, a corruption that resulted from the fact that men of wealth regarded both legislature and judiciary as commodities that could be bought. Hamlin Garland described the ruin of the Middle-Western farmer at the hands of profiteering industry.

The American realistic novel rose to its greatest heights when it became occupied with the scrutiny of American capitalism, with the work of Howells, Frank Norris, Upton Sinclair, culminating in the epic achievements of Theodore Dreiser. Even Henry James, so far removed in his themes and preoccupations from the great masses of the American

people and the main currents of American social life, saw and wrote of the dangers to democracy that stemmed from the oligarchy of wealth. His dominant theme was man's search for freedom, a freedom in which he could live as a full, rounded and moral human being. And while James never saw how this freedom could be obtained, he showed conclusively that it had nothing in common with the morality of the struggle for money power.

THERE is also a tradition of militancy in deed, as well as word, in American letters. The poet Philip Freneau fought the English in 1776, and fought Hamilton's Federalists in 1793. Thoreau went to jail in protest against the Mexican war. Emerson gave up his ministry; Whitman, too old to fight in the Civil War, nursed the wounded; Bierce, coming from a border state divided in loyalties, volunteered for the Northern forces; Sinclair made his novels a weapon for political argument and labor organization. Dreiser, in 1928, travelled to the Soviet Union to see with his own eyes how the Russian people were faring. He took up the fight for the miners of Harlan County, Kentucky, and joined the Communist Party.

We have one American economist since Benjamin Franklin who can be called a man of letters, for the originality and depth of his social insights, the satiric cutting edge of his style: Thorstein Veblen. After the First World War, even while the Versailles conference was in progress, he exposed the imperialist character of its dealings, and attacked the interventionists in Russia. We have one President whose writings, more than those of any other, have become a precious part of our literary heritage: Abraham Lincoln. And he is of course the President who more than any other was a man of the people, created by them, never removed from them. And he has inspired literature as well.

He is one of the heroes of Parrington's *Main Currents in American Thought*, which might be described almost as an epic poem of the American democratic tradition. He is the subject of our greatest biography and one of the greatest biographies in the language, the four volumes of Carl Sandburg.

I do not say that all of the writers mentioned here were free from confusions, or that many did not relapse into pessimism and despair. But they searched boldly for truth, described it when they saw it without regard for the labels and slanders that literary fakers would throw at them. They did not hesitate to take sides when they saw the issues clearly. There are many fighting liberals in American life today, as there always have been in American history. But there are also many who assume the title and exercise their "freedom" of thought within the shrinking margin permitted them after they have sworn blind obedience to capitalism in the most reactionary stage of its development. The true liberal has always been a man who fights for human progress against the attacks of tory reaction, and has nothing but contempt for the witch-hunt and name-calling, the hypocritical semantics that have always been the tory stock in trade.

One cannot think of our literary heritage and our democratic political heritage as anything but one fraternal union of word and action. The great American literary tradition is the celebration of American democracy, and democracy seen not as a word or a static institution but as a struggle. If we look hard enough, we will find some literary craftsmen who did fine work within a narrow range of thought bounded by a reactionary set of ideas, just as there can be literary activity for a while under tory domination. There are cells alive in the human body long after the heart has stopped, and artistic work can continue for a while after its democratic heart has stopped, its range of investigation into the fullness of human and social experience proscribed, its source of fresh material poisoned. Even fascism has found its practitioners who delicately recreate old art forms, who work quaintly and prettily with a censored set of pigmy subjects, men who will hint symbolically at an inner mental decadence and hysteria. But the heart has nevertheless stopped, and culture is dead.

One poem of Walt Whitman's has always seemed to me to typify the American literary tradition at its best. Though it describes the Europe of 1848, it is as applicable today. Writing of the martyred dead of that people's revolutionary movement, Whitman's closing stanzas read:

*They live in other young men, O kings!
They live in brothers again ready to defy you,
They were purified by death, they were taught and exalted.
Not a grave of the murder'd for freedom but grows seed
for freedom in its turn to bear seed,
Which the winds carry afar and re-sow, and the rains and
the snows nourish.*

*Not a disembodied spirit can the weapons of tyrants let
loose,
But it stalks invisibly over the earth, whispering, counselling,
cautioning.*

Liberty, let others despair of you—I never despair of you.

*Is the house shut? is the master away?
Nevertheless, be ready, be not weary of watching,
He will soon return, his messengers come anon.*

Alvah Bessie

THE LINCOLN MEN

IN ONE sense these are bad days for the American heritage. For since the war to destroy fascism ended, our allies have become our enemies and our enemies have become our friends. The word "our" in this context does not of course embrace the vast majority of the American people—but merely that tiny minority that Vladimir Ilyitch Lenin called "the executive committee of the bourgeoisie"—a minority that has usurped the rights of the American people and presumes to speak in its name.

To this minority the words "The Abraham Lincoln Brigade" serve as a stimulus that provokes an immediate reaction. When we were actually fighting in Spain the Hearst press called us "the scum of the earth" or "the dregs of the Marxist international gangs." Today we constitute merely one of over 250 American organizations lumped by reactionaries under the over-all title "Red Front Organizations." And like the other 249-odd organizations, we hold certain ideals in common: the extension and the deepening of American and world democracy.

To a man who holds the high privilege of membership



"The Partisan," woodcut by Nikolai Pirnati.

in this organization, it is difficult to write about the Brigade in these terms. But most of us have become fairly objective about what we tried to do in Spain almost ten years ago—and what we are still trying to do. And we have never had occasion to be ashamed of what we started out to do—and what we hope to help accomplish.

Nor have we ever been ashamed of the fact that a large number of us were and are Communists. For we know the record that the Communists of the world have established for themselves needs no apology, no defense. It has been demonstrated that in every country in which fascism came to power, they were of the heart of the resistance; and in every country in which fascism was smashed, their devotion to the ideals of democracy has been rewarded by the people in the form in which democratic peoples express their approval: public office.

It is a proud thing to belong to an organization that numbers among its foreign comrades such men as Joseph Broz (Tito), Andre Marty, General Rodimstev of Stalin-grad, General Swirzcewski of Poland (known in Spain as General Walter), Gallo of Italy. And we are as proud of our American living as we are of our dead . . . Boettcher, Hecht, Lopoff, Wolman, Sasson, McKelvey White, Lenthier, Doran, Merriman, Detro, Herndon and over fifteen hundred others.

FOR what is this heritage we celebrate? A cliché known as the fight for freedom. That, cliché or no, still fires the hearts of men, women and children the world over and always will. To a man oppressed words cannot act as bogeymen; he knows a living demon: oppression. You cannot frighten a Chinese peasant with the Red Menace, nor very many of the European millions who felt the meaning of the word fascism in their living flesh and saw it demonstrated in the mountains of dead flesh fascism created.

Dolores Ibarruri expressed the meaning of this cliché better than most when she said, on the departure of the Brigade from Spain: "They gave up everything: their loves, their countries, home and fortune; fathers, mothers, wives, brothers, sisters and children, and they came and told us: 'We are here. Your cause, Spain's cause, is ours—it is the cause of all advanced and progressive mankind.'"

For that cause some sixteen hundred American volunteers gratefully endured rotten privation and accepted sudden death . . . in Spain. For that cause seven hundred survivors of Spain entered our American Army in this last war and three hundred more served in the merchant marine, repeating the agony and the beauty of Spain, at last under their own beloved flag. For that cause the rest of us serve in every capacity in which men and women can serve in times of "peace"—to keep from our own land an indigenous fascism whose appetite has been whetted by the ruins of Europe.

We ask no special commendation for what we are, have been or hope to be. It has been written of us that "if the world has a future, they have preserved it." We can't agree with that over-emotional appraisal, though we are honored by the sentiment. We can only expect what small approval should be voiced of people who felt they had a useful job to do and tried to do it.

It is a fact that the fight the people of Spain made from 1936 to 1939 *did* stir the conscience of the world—and we had a small share in that fight. It is a fact that that struggle gave the rest of the democratic world three years in which to better understand the issues—and the world

was not too slow in learning them. It is also a fact that we felt—in Spain and since Spain—that we were fighting for America, for our *own* country and its future, and while the official historians have not yet recognized that fact, they will.

It makes us proud to know that in Poland and in Yugoslavia survivors of the International Brigades have been accorded recognition by their new governments—the status of respected veterans in the world war against fascism. If our own country has not yet accorded us such recognition, it is not the fault of our people and we have lost no sleep over this minor dereliction.

For the fight goes on and the roll of anonymous fighters for the American tradition is endless: the union organizer, slugged and beaten in the small town; the Communist organizer ridden on a rail; the Negro lynched in his home; the housewife fighting the profiteer in butter or meat; the ex-GI who leads a protest on the housing situation; the Mexican-American fighting restrictive covenants; the man and woman on the picketline; the Jew fighting race prejudice in the school or neighborhood—all these have equal claim to the name of Lincoln and Lincoln would be proud if they chose his name as a banner under which to fight.



The Antiquity of Freedom

By William Cullen Bryant

O Freedom! thou art not, as poets dream,
A fair young girl, with light and delicate limbs,
And wavy tresses gushing from the cap
With which the Roman master crowned his slave
When he took off the gyves. A bearded man,
Armed to the teeth, art thou; one mailed hand
Grasps the broad shield, and one the sword; thy brow,
Glorious in beauty though it be, is scarred
With tokens of old wars; thy massive limbs
Are strong with struggling. Power at thee has launched
His bolts, and with his lightnings smitten thee;
They could not quench the life thou hast from heaven.
Merciless Power has dug thy dungeon deep,
And his swart armorers, by a thousand fires,
Have forged thy chain; yet, while he deems thee bound,
The links are shivered, and the prison walls
Fall outward; terribly thou springest forth,
As springs the flame above a burning pile,
And shoutest to the nations, who return
Thy shoutings, while the pale oppressor flies.

review and comment



DANDY CANDY

Confectioner William Saroyan offers a new box of spiritual sweets to keep us happy.

By MARGERY BARRETT

JIM DANDY: *Fat Man in a Famine, a play by William Saroyan. Harcourt, Brace. \$3.*

IN HIS stage directions, which are habitually as voluminous and as much a part of the play as any of Shaw's, Saroyan describes one of the characters in *Jim Dandy* as "voluptuous, dreamy, desperate, wasted, pathetic, batty and a delight to behold." With the exception of the word "desperate," the adjectives might well be applied to the play itself. Saroyan—exuberantly, irritatingly optimistic—is never desperate, although by the end of the second act the reader may be. This is another of Saroyan's miracle plays, concerned as usual with "love" and the alleged oneness of man, relentlessly sentimental as the movies, and crammed with language which is as evocative as a hurdy-gurdy, and often as preposterous.

The *mise en scene* is a transparent eggshell out of which rise "miserable and majestic ruins" representing "immemorial and immediate reality." "The play happens," it says here, "as if everybody in it had survived pestilence, famine, ignorance, injustice, inhumanity, torture, crime and madness. In short, as if everybody in it were human. Prolonged suffering has given everybody in the play dignity, humor and simplicity." I must confess that there arose in me at this point a growing waspishness regarding Mr. Saroyan and his play. I do not believe that prolonged suffering gives people dignity, humor and simplicity; I believe it gives them rickets, scabies and neuroses.

Out of the playwright's egg a dozen or more characters proceed, principal among them Jim Dandy, who is paralyzed by the weight of his own flesh

and who represents man; Jim Crow, a Negro who has attached himself to Jim Dandy as a protector, but not, we are assured, as a servant; Jim Smither, a condemned criminal who was born innocent; Jim the Maharajah, who sells secrets for five cents; a man named Jock; a man named Jack; and two people named Johnny. They represent man, too, for according to Saroyan "every living man is Jim Dandy. All who live are one." Then there are Flora, tawdry and wistful, who works in a public library; Molly, who bursts out of the rags of an old woman to dance like a butterfly; Gibbon, an ape in the process of becoming a man; a soldier of the Empire called Tommy Singh; two unborn children; and a skeptic named Fishkin with whom, I must admit, I was in sympathy a good deal of the time.

That there is no plot seemed to me to be the play's single great resemblance to everyday life. Throughout three acts the characters explain themselves. The condemned man is hanged and another appears to take his place. Jim Dandy and Jim Crow come to the eggshell. Two of the characters fall in love (Fall? They topple, hurtle, plummet and sink like stones, and all completely without previous communication. This is reminiscent of the scene in *The Time of Your Life*—same playwright—where two strangers meet and fall without so much as a how do you do. I suppose Saroyan means that people carry love about with them, looking for a hook to hang it on. This would seem to me one of his more legitimate assumptions.) The unborn children get born. Most important of all, Fishkin, who believes

that nothing helps and is constantly adjuring the other characters to drop dead, becomes converted from a philosophy of hate to one of love and a belief in the rather vague miracles that Saroyan is advertising.

Symbolism litters the stage like poppies in a wheat field. Water drunk in need becomes wine. A scrap of bread eaten in community vanquishes hunger for the entire cast. The characters search for the holy grail in the public library. (One of them, by the way, is named Jock Arimathea.) The characters find the holy grail in the public library. At the end, amid rejoicing, a toast is drunk to His Majesty, Man.

Throughout it is not always—in fact, not even usually—exactly clear what the playwright means. If one assumes that Saroyan is writing in good faith, an important problem of esthetics arises: how much by way of communication does the writer owe the reader? I have never believed that the reader must be passively spoon-fed on ideas to which his palate is used and which, consequently, do not tax his digestion. Nor, I think, need the method of presentation necessarily be orthodox or even easily understood. The writings of James Joyce, Sean O'Casey, and to a lesser extent Virginia Woolf, Katharine Anne Porter and Elizabeth Bowen, demand that the reader participate actively; it's much too easy to say that symbolism, fantasy, extreme subtlety are evasions.

But it is one thing to spade for a meaning, when meaning, so precise, so finely distinguished from another meaning that it must be expressed in half-tones or symbols, is there; another to disguise conventional ideas in unconventional forms, to smear a rococo frosting on a cheap cake, or on no cake at all. It seems to me that this latter is what Saroyan does. His work is audacious only in presentation, not in basic content. It is the juxtaposition of the mystical and the honky-tonk that makes him sound as though he were saying something he heard on Mount Sinai when actually he is telling us that poverty and squalor have their compensations, that men need only love each other, that life can be beautiful, that man's solution will be achieved by miracle, that one need only live and love and, presumably, do the other things that "inspirational" pieces in the women's magazines urge.

If it were not for his great gift of language, Saroyan would be negligible. But his prose is so sensually beautiful

that one can almost taste it and feel it; his dialogue, which is infrequent because most of the play is written in a kind of auto-intoxicated rhetoric that certainly is not the conversation of living people, is tender and cool and natural and often terribly funny. His language leaps, sings, terrifies, tickles, enchants, jitterbugs, rhymes, doesn't rhyme, causes one to tremble if one is susceptible to language, intoxicates, infuriates, does everything, in short, but tell the truth. But as the playwright himself says on the title page, "He knew the truth and was looking for something better." That's probably what ails the man.

Search For a Home

MY FATHER'S HOUSE, by Meyer Levin. Viking. \$2.50.

"MY FATHER'S HOUSE" is the story of a quest—not for the Golden Fleece but for a father, a father to give a frightened Jewish child fresh from a German concentration camp the feeling of security he needs in order to be able to continue living in a nightmarish world. It tells of little Daavid Halevi and how he came to feel his terrible isolation among his fellow-beings. It describes the terror of his aloneness and of his wistful certainty that in this world of evil, murder and cruelty, no one will come to his aid. He has learned to rely on himself alone, not out of an inner strength but because of a neurotic fear. And so, staggering under the unendurable burden of his private and cosmic grief, the eleven-year-old waif begins a compulsive search for his dimly-remembered father whom the Nazis had snatched away from him six years before in Cracow to join the ghoulis procession to the fiery furnaces.

At their hurried parting his father had told him to meet him in Palestine and so, obsessed by this parental bidding, the boy at last succeeds in making his way into Palestine with a boatload of illegal Jewish immigrants, refugees like himself. Then begins his odyssey, trance-like and unreal, like a sad dream.

But *My Father's House* is also an allegory by means of which the novelist tries to transform the personal quest of little Daavid into the universal search for certainty, for a protecting father, of the abandoned Jewish people. According to the logic of the author's Zionist convictions, Jews can

find their father nowhere except in a Jewish national home in Palestine. In the end, when Daavid discovers that his search has been in vain and that his father and the rest of his family are dead, he escapes into the protective delusion of infantilism, for he can no longer endure the burden of life by means of his own puny strength. Eventually he reemerges into reality, aided by a psychiatrist and adult friends who care. He learns to endure his grief with sober resignation, to compensate himself for the loss of his family in a filial attachment for the greater family of Jewry in Palestine.

"We'll build our house on this stone," Avram said . . .

"Daavid put his hands on the stone. 'The house of my father, Yisroel.'" ("Yisroel" is the Hebrew for "Israel"—the collective Biblical name for all Jews.)

Meyer Levin is fervently a Zionist and it is not this reviewer's task to discuss the validity of his solution to the problem of the "orphaned House of Israel." He is a sensitive, perceptive writer. *My Father's House* has humanity and color, a sustained mood, and above all a delicate pathos. He plays his sense of tragedy on muted strings so that grief isn't turgid and declamatory but pensive and restrained. Unfortunately, he has written about little Daavid's quest as if it were a Golden Legend. Years ago he adapted some Chassidic legends in a collection he called *The Golden Mountain*. Later on he wrote fine social novels of Jewish life in realistic style, such as *The Old Bunch* and *The New Bridge*. But in his latest novel he has once more abandoned realism. The lure of mysticism, an early preoccupation of Mr. Levin's, has again proven too strong for his literary judgment. Whereas in his Chassidic legends the mystic elements were an intrinsic part of the folk-content, the injection of the miraculous and the incredible into such a modern novel on a pressing social problem as *My Father's House* is, to say the least, somewhat bizarre. Moreover, for Mr. Levin as a social novelist it should go up as a red light of danger: social novels and mysticism don't blend. Social problems can be solved only by social means, which are very real. Mysticism is an admission of the failure of reason and the human agency and of a reliance on the supernatural to effect desired ends. Its use in literature tends to befuddle the reader

and encourages him to escape into unreality.

To make his mysticism more palatable Mr. Levin dresses it up in persuasive psychoanalytical trappings. Like oil and water, psychoanalysis and mysticism don't mix either. Had the author, for instance, been content to remain purely psychoanalytical about Daavid's compulsion to find his father and about his subsequent mental illness resulting from the failure of his search, he would have been movingly convincing. The injection of the mystical, no matter how lyrical and poetic—and Mr. Levin can be that most impressively—only succeeds in blurring the outlines of the real.

Probably just as dismaying to this reviewer is the author's chauvinism on the subject of the Arabs in Palestine. True, he offends less in this than many another Zionist writer; Mr. Levin seems to belong somewhere in the Zionist Left, which aims at a rapprochement with the Arabs. However, throughout the book we find him condescending to the Arabs and constantly hinting of their moral and intellectual inferiority to the Jews. Concerning the Arabs—"Yes, we've had our difficulties," Zev said. They [the Jewish newcomers to Palestine] would learn the complications in their time: whom [of the Arabs] to believe, and whom to bribe and whom to fear." Perhaps if Mr. Levin and other liberal Zionists had clung less to this impertinent and cynical view and, from the beginning a generation ago, had shared more the fraternal attitude toward the Arab masses adopted by the Jewish-Arab Communist Party of Palestine and by the Hashomer Hatzair, the political left-wing of Palestine labor, the solution to the tortured Palestine problem would have been a lot nearer today. Of course the same thing can be said of the Arab nationalists who have been trapped into a virulent chauvinism by their reactionary feudal leaders.

In the final analysis, it is Palestine and not Daavid that is the real central character of *My Father's House*. The novel probably presents the most vivid picture of the life of the *chalutzim* (pioneers) to date. Mr. Levin knows intimately the life he depicts, having himself worked as a pioneer in a *kvutza* (commune). Unfortunately, he is less convincing concerning his characters. With the exception of Abba, they are pallid, two-dimensional wraiths that never come fully to life.

One can hardly distinguish one character from another because they all think, feel and speak alike. There is no psychological chiaroscuro. All *chalutzim* and refugees are gentle; all are devoted, wise and good. It recalls to mind that boastful ancient Palestinian saying: "The very air of Palestine makes people wise." Presumably also noble (Arabs excepted, of course!).

Intellectually, nationalism carries with it mixed blessings, even to sincere writers like Meyer Levin.

NATHAN AUSUBEL.

Radio Without Soap

RADIO'S BEST PLAYS, selected and edited by Joseph Liss. Preface by Norman Corwin. Greenberg. \$3.

EVERY anthologist has to contend with reviewers and readers who will not only take exception to his choices but carp at him for not including their own favorites. Radio is a particularly hard row to hoe. For if everyone as a speaker of prose considers himself a potential author, then it is a truism that any person who has listened to a single announcer's crispy-crunchy voice considers himself an authority on what is good (and especially what is bad) about the microphone.

Joseph Liss, well-known radio writer and editor of this collection with the blurbish title, has divided the scripts into three interesting categories. He calls them "Cycle From Fear to Fear," "Plays With a Purpose" and "Plays About People." The first section is far and away the most distinguished. Opening with Archibald MacLeish's verse play "The Fall of the City," it concludes with Arnold Perl's "The Empty Noose," a semi-documentary on the execution of the eleven leading Nazis at Nuremberg. The MacLeish drama is artificial at times, irritatingly abstract in its setting, but skillfully conceived and written for the most part. Perl's anti-fascist play, broadcast twice the evening of the hangings, is powerful and terrifying in its truths. Between these two you will find the text and some of the music for Marc Blitzstein's "The Airborne," a radio version of John Mason Brown's eyewitness account of D-Day, Millard Lampell's "October Morning"—a rather poeticized end-of-the-war script—and Arthur Laurents' magnificent study of a disfigured soldier, "The Face." This last shows radio dialogue at its most spirited, its

most mature—particularly in the closing speeches about democracy that manage to avoid clichés.

The middle section of the anthology consists of work by the late Stephen Vincent Benet, by Norman Corwin and other important radio scripters like Erik Barnouw, Morton Wishengrad, Carl Carmer and Norman Rosten. But the selections from their work are disappointing. Benet's "Nightmare at Noon," or several of



"Well, gentlemen, with this work I feel we are founding a great literary tradition."

his "Dear Adolf" scripts, far surpass the excerpts from "Western Star" which Liss has chosen. "Daybreak" is not up to Corwin at his strongest. And Wishengrad's series for "The Eternal Light" are far more impressive than this one of "The Last Inca." Rosten, too, has contributed finer drama to radio than the section here presented from "The Big Road," his long poem about the Alcan Highway. Barnouw's "The Story They'll Never Print" is a splendid bit on race relations in a war plant.

The third section could be subtitled Radio Biographies. Ethel Deckelman's "Helen Keller" is a sensitive, imaginative study of this wonderful warm-hearted citizen. Elizabeth Lomax's adaptation of a portion of Thomas Wolfe's "Look Homeward, Angel" is exciting proof that radio can take over any area of literature and recreate it for the ear. Other scripts in this last third of the anthology are by Arthur Miller, Fletcher Marle of Canada, Lucille Fletcher (original author of the delightful "My Client Curly" and

the hair-raising "Wrong Number"), John Faulk, Al Morgan and Liss himself.

The authors' brief prefaces to the plays and Corwin's general introductory remarks are provocative. Nobody seems happy about the state of radio, but if a people's movement can start badgering the FCC there is no doubt that plenty of talent exists for writing adult and intelligent scripts.

It is regrettable that no dramas presented by the CIO or AFL have been included, and none of the socially significant vignettes from "Green Valley, USA," and so few from the experimental showcase of "The Columbia Workshop." Meanwhile the plays Mr. Liss has chosen may not be radio's "best," but they are worth retaining in permanent form.

HELEN RALSTON.

Short Stories

THE CAPTAIN'S TIGER, by Jerome Weidman. Reynal & Hitchcock. \$2.75.

OF THE twenty-one stories in this book, thirteen were originally published in the *New Yorker*. The *New Yorker*-type yarn is usually a delicate, surface concoction of casual sentiment, faint plot and understatement—the characters never, never get too excited over anything, good or bad. Some stories published by this magazine are very good, and can be included among the finest stories of our time. However, most of them don't quite come off; they are like pointless jokes that one doesn't understand but politely smiles at anyway. Unfortunately Mr. Weidman has written twelve unsuccessful *New Yorker* stories, most of them padded by excessive description to the point of dullness. The stories are about the war—as fought in the Pentagon Building and London bars; about the East Side of Weidman's childhood; and about the usual assortment of barfly characters (the better bars, of course). In only one story, "My Aunt From Twelfth Street," does Weidman hit his stride. In this short tale of a gang murder on the East Side, as seen through the eyes of a child, the author gives a revealing picture of the slums, the fear and poverty that haunts the people living and working there.

The other stories in this collection were published in *Salute*, *Today's Woman*, *Good Housekeeping* and *Liberty*. In "The Neat Mexicans" Weidman ends on a positive, satisfying note when a college instructor, fed up with

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four years of hard work and red tape in the Pentagon Building, resigns by flattening a fascist-minded Army captain. But in "Gallantry In Action" we see a Jewish Uncle Tom: a well-to-do businessman who meets an anti-Semitic Army officer on a train and ends up buying the officer food and drinks, and quietly leaving the train. He is one of those people who think the best solution to bigotry is not to talk about it.

In another story, "Send Four Men To Hanoi," Weidman tells of a minor employe of a big oil company, an old man who runs the message center, who constantly baits and argues with one of the company's top executives. For mysterious reasons known only to Weidman, the old man is never fired, as would most certainly happen in real life. This naive, romantic conception of the lone worker defying the company is outdated, even in slick fiction. If Mr. Weidman had been on the picket-line in front of the Brooklyn Trust Company during the recent strike of the bank's employes, he might have learned better.

In an interesting introduction Mr. Weidman says this book is for the "captain's tiger," a slang name for a boy who was the personal servant of the captain of an English ship on which Weidman made a rough crossing during the war. Now "The Captain's Tiger" is a wonderful title, and all this stuff about the book being for an unknown cabin boy may be a fine publicity angle. I'm sure Weidman thought it all up himself, for in all his writings one gets the feeling of an angle-boy, a smart operator, a talented writer always hustling for a fast buck. Mr. Weidman was the white-haired boy of the publishers with his first two novels, *I Can Get It For You Wholesale* and *What's In It For Me?*, but he's passed the precocious stage, and it's time he discovered that there are other people in the world beside those who always have a cocktail glass in their hands, and the latest witty remark on their lips. The world is moving fast these days, and Weidman, if he is to be a real writer, ought to stop scratching the surface of life and start digging—before he outsmarts himself.

FRED WITWER.

Books Received

STAR-SPANGLED MIKADO, by Frank Kelley and Cornelius Ryan. McBride. \$3.50. The authors of this book make it pretty clear that the Japanese occupation isn't all that

it's cracked up to be. They are alarmed by the way that MacArthur is playing ball with the "heirs apparent of the old order" and by the fact that he has turned the occupation into a one-man show. There are some biting remarks on the general's vanity and arrogance and on the incompetence of some of his staff officers. The authors feel that the country should be turned over to the UN. Most of the points are well taken. However, the book is badly organized, and there are a number of inaccuracies. The authors, who were foreign correspondents in Tokyo, seem to have strung the book together from their cables (a disease among correspondents in recent years). As a result the book has very little cohesion or balance. It's too bad, because otherwise the authors have done a fairly honest and intelligent job.

THE TOM WALKER, by Mari Sandoz. Dial. \$3. A novel of three generations of an American family, and the return of their men from three wars. A sharp and bitter expose of the role of the trusts in the spoilation of the American people. An imaginary fascist coup is projected in the section of the novel dealing with the aftermath of World War II.

DIRTY EDDIE, by Ludwig Bemelmans. Viking. \$2.75. Mr. Bemelmans has done himself and his readers no service by dishing up this cold, tired rehash of the stuff on which gossip columns fatten. The quality of the book is further diminished by utterly insensitive characterizations of Jewish and Negro figures.

HARRY TRUMAN, A POLITICAL BIOGRAPHY, by William P. Helm. \$3. The subject of this study is always seeing red. "Truman saw red with both eyes" when an enemy of Boss Pendergast was nominated for US Attorney. He "immediately saw red. And Red" when Henry Wallace used the phrase "the end justified the means." Seeing red is associated in Mr. Helm's mind with Harry Truman's overcoming his sense of mediocrity. Alas, both subject and biography remain untransformed.

BEST WORLD SHORT STORIES, 1947, edited by John Cournos and Sybil Norton. D. Appleton-Century. \$3. An unusually pretentious title, but with a better percentage of significant and sometimes rare writing than is usually found in anthologies. Margaret Shedd, Elizabeth Hardwick, Maurice Roelants and V. S. Pritchett (all names you rarely hear) have contributed very fine stories while Rhys Davies, Ilya Ehrenburg and Lao She bring their always excellent workmanship to some other good pieces.

THE UNITED STATES IN WORLD AFFAIRS: 1945-1947, by John C. Campbell. Harper. \$5. The contents of this volume fail to match the impressiveness of its title. It is a more or less worthy successor to the preceding annuals by Scroggs, Lippmann and Shepardson. Written close to the news, it

has the virtue of saving time that might be consumed in hunting through old clippings. As an interpretative work it is shallow and with a point of view which did not make it impossible for John Foster Dulles to write the book's introduction. The bibliography and chronology of events are useful.

OPERATION MOSCOW, by Christopher Norborg. Dutton. \$3.50. Another in a crop of disgraceful and dishonest books, with the added twist this time that the author was a clergyman in the Presbyterian church. Hiding behind his own special and private interpretation of Christian ethics, Dr. Norborg flings most everything from the old Goebbels arsenal. All of it sounds like Hearst and Hoover after an especially bad night.

ALL IN LINE, cartoons by Saul Steinberg. Penguin. 25¢. A reprint of the Duell, Sloan & Pearce book. Most of the drawings, which have the quality of fine icing, have appeared in the *New Yorker*.

BALLET AS THEATER

WHERE the Ballet Theater, about which I commented last season, attempts consciously to live up to its name and to make drama of ballet, as far as wordless and patterned action can, the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo concentrates on perfecting its rendition of the classical dance forms. In the simple stories on which its numbers are based such plot developments as there are serve chiefly as occasions for dance turns. Virtuosity is cultivated. The audience response is informed and contagious, and the performance is interrupted to allow the dancers to take numerous bows.

As between the two companies it is not necessary to abjure one to enjoy the other. Both companies are skillfully providing an increasingly popular form of entertainment. American experience is on its way to matching Soviet experience in turning a once aristocratic into a democratic art. That a combination in which the two trends approach each other is particularly effective was demonstrated by some of the Balanchine ballets, particularly "Night Shadow," where the classic patterns weave into effective romantic drama.

New York's current ballet season started well with the fortnight of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo early in September. The heat wave failed to wilt the verve of the dancers, just as it failed to keep the crowds from the theater or dampen their enthusiasm.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

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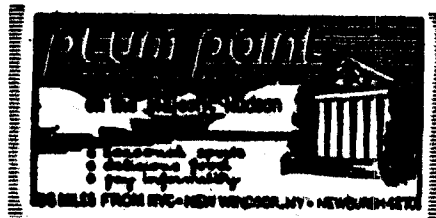
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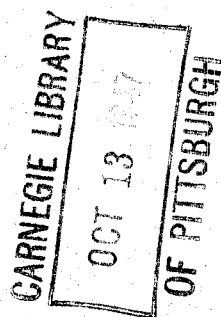
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